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SERIAL: DODID 39-6A

BODY

SUBJ: CHINA: FOREIGN MINISTER VISIT. ~~(C/NF)~~

DOI: 8 FEB 91 (AS OF 1340 EST)

TEXT: 1. ~~(C/NF)~~ QIAN QICHEN WILL BE THE HIGHEST RANKING CHINESE OFFICIAL TO TRAVEL TO EUROPE SINCE THE TIANANMEN MASSACRE IN JUNE 1989.

2. ~~(C/NF)~~ COMMENT: FOREIGN MINISTER QIAN WILL TRAVEL TO PORTUGAL, SPAIN, POLAND, BULGARIA, HUNGARY, GREECE, AND MALTA FROM 21 FEBRUARY TO 9 MARCH. DISCUSSIONS WILL PROBABLY FOCUS ON THE PERSIAN GULF WAR, THE CAMBODIAN ISSUE, AND WAYS TO IMPROVE BILATERAL ECONOMIC AND MILITARY COOPERATION.

3. ~~(C/NF)~~ WHILE IN PORTUGAL, SPAIN, AND GREECE, QIAN IS LIKELY TO EXPRESS HIS COUNTRY'S APPRECIATION FOR THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY'S DECISION LAST OCTOBER TO RESUME ECONOMIC TIES TO CHINA.

4. ~~(C/NF)~~ THE FOREIGN MINISTER IS LIKELY TO HEAR CONCERNS ABOUT THE TRIAL OF CHINESE DISSIDENTS. SOME OFFICIALS MAY EVEN HINT THAT AN OVERLY HARSH SENTENCE BY THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT WILL CAUSE A SLOWDOWN IN THE STEADY IMPROVEMENT IN BILATERAL TIES.

5. ~~(C/NF)~~

IT WILL ALSO RESULT IN RECIPROCAL VISITS TO CHINA BY QIAN'S COUNTERPARTS, CAPSTONING THE LONG AND DIFFICULT PROCESS OF RE-NORMALIZING RELATIONS.

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